

LEADERSHIP CRISIS AND CORRUPTION IN THE NIGERIAN PUBLIC SECTOR: AN ALBATROSS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

David Imhonopi
Moses Urim Ugochukwu
Covenant University

Abstract

The public sector of every nation is critical to its national development. Through its ministries, departments and agencies, government puts in place policies, programmes and services that help galvanise development at all levels, engender economic progress and increase trust and connection between the managers of the state and the people. In Nigeria, the public sector has become an epitome of all that is corrupt, mediocre and fraudulent. Self-preservation is preferred to national interest and the leadership crisis prevalent at all levels of decision-making has further deepened the imbroglio. Thus, Nigeria has lost traction in its attempt to achieve national development because of the invidious climate of “chop-I-chop” politics, ethnicity, mediocrity, partisanship, cronyism, corrupted process of recruitment of leaders, among other factors. This study has identified the albatross to national development in Nigeria as a spin-off of the leadership crisis and corruption prevalent in its public sector and made valuable recommendations.

Key words: leadership crisis, corruption, public sector, Nigeria, national development

INTRODUCTION

It is an axiom that Nigeria is richly endowed by providence with human and material resources critical for national development and advancement. However, since gaining political independence, Nigeria has continued to meander the path befitting failed, weak and “juvenile” states. A state that had very great prospects at independence and was touted to lead Africa out of the backwoods of underdevelopment and economic dependency, Nigeria is still stuck in the league of very poor, corrupt, underdeveloped, infrastructurally decaying, crisis-riven, morally bankrupt and leadership-deficient countries of the South. Rather than become an exemplar for transformational leadership, modern bureaucracy, national development, national integration and innovation, Nigeria seems to be infamous for whatever is mediocre, corrupt, insanely violent and morally untoward.

Thus, one cannot but agree with the position that Nigeria is a victim of poor leadership and convoluted systemic corruption which has become pervasive and cancerous in the country's national life. This view has been held strongly in literature by scholars and writers who have identified the inexorable nexus between leadership crisis and corruption in the country as the continued reason for Nigeria's inglorious economic throes, political convolutions and national underdevelopment. Current debates rest on the conclusion that Nigerian leadership suffers from extreme moral depravity and attitudinal debauchery (Agbor, 2011; Agbor, 2012; Ezirim, 2010; Ebegbulem, 2009; Ogbunwezeh, 2007). In fact, Agbor argues that the success or failure of any society depends largely on the mannerism of its leadership. He adds that the result of poor leadership in Nigeria is embodied as poor governance manifested in consistent political crisis and insecurity, poverty of the extreme order among the citizens, debilitating miasma of corruption and rising unemployment indices. Tipping corruption as a dinosaur syndrome in Nigeria's national life (anon, 2010), Nigeria's nationhood has been caught in the whirlpool of a corrupt public sector that has remained a hotbed of all that is vice, sleazy and retrogressive. While not exclusive to Nigeria, a report considers corruption to be one of the most chronic macroeconomic problems confronting most African countries today (ACBF, 2007). It is seen as the root cause of the various economic and political crises that have plagued the African region, and continues to aggravate not only the problem of underdevelopment of each country, but also that of abject poverty of the citizenry. For example, political corruption is the cause of sit-tight political leaders, especially in Africa, with constitutional amendments making them eligible to contest presidential elections as long as they wish. The ability to continue to control state power enables them to allocate national resources as they wish. This promotes wanton, suboptimal allocation of national resources, and the ensuing macroeconomic mismanagement which result in persistent economic cataclysm.

Although not a Nigerian phenomenon, the specter of corruption seems to haunt the nation and has permeated the entire fabric of state. Aided by leadership crisis bedeviling the nation,

corruption has become the singular most vicious albatross to national development.

This paper seeks to investigate the inglorious roles that leadership crisis and corruption have played and are playing in stymieing national development in Nigeria. The paper will also attempt a historical analysis of corruption in the country, examine existing literature on the twin problems of poor leadership and corruption in Nigeria and the impact these have on national development, identify the causes of corruption and leadership crisis in the country and suggest ways to tame this dinosaur or monster ala Mbama (2012).

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ANALYSIS

There are different viewpoints on the concepts of leadership, corruption and national development. A few of these shall be considered here. Leadership is a vital element in the social relationships of groups whether in government or at work. Groups need leaders and leaders need followers. Academic and management literature on leadership has focused almost exclusively on the individual traits, styles and behaviour that characterise leaders. Some recent research in leadership has advanced beyond these more simplistic individual level models by calling attention to such things as shared and rotational leadership style, "meaning-making" and "influence" and to the importance of understanding "followers". As Urim (2009) observed, leadership in the past has been seen as an elitist activity related to power and to hierarchy. It was considered an essentially top-down, charismatic, and individualistic process. Leadership was seen as an inbred and congenital potential possessed by a minority. He argues that increasingly, today, whether in business, government or in not-for-profits, it is commonly agreed that leadership is needed at all levels of organisations if such organisations are to ably respond to the challenges in the society or marketplace. Therefore, leadership is akin to a dynamic process in which people come together to pursue changes and, in doing so, collectively develop a shared vision of what the world (or some part of it) should be like, making sense of their experience and shaping their decisions and actions. Thus as Cole (1997, p. 54) posits:

Leadership is a dynamic process at work in a group whereby one individual over a particular period of time, and in a particular organisational context, influences the other group members to commit themselves freely to the achievement of group tasks or goals.

In defining corruption, Amuwo (2005) and Obayelu (2007) consider it as the exploitation of public position, resources and power for private gain. Fjeldstad & Isaksen (2008, p. 3) and Ogundiya (2009, p. 5) define corruption as "the betrayal of public trust for individual or sectional gain." Obayelu went further to identify corruption as "efforts to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private gain at public expense; or a misuse of power for private benefit." Corruption covers a broad spectrum of activities ranging from fraud (theft through misrepresentation), embezzlement (misappropriation of corporate or public funds) to bribery (payments made in order to gain an advantage or to avoid a disadvantage). From a political point of view, Aiyede (2006, p. 5) views corruption as "the abuse or misuse of public or governmental power for illegitimate private advantages." His view corroborates the position of Lipset and Lenz (2000) that corruption is an effort to secure wealth or power through illegal means for private benefit at public expense. Tanzi (1998) adds that such abuse of public power may not necessarily be for one's private benefit but for the benefit of one's party, class, tribe, or family. Although corruption is global in scope, it is more pronounced in developing societies because of their weak institutions. It is minimal in developed nations because of existing institutional control mechanisms which are more developed and effective.

According to Imhonopi & Urim (2010), national development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people, namely, by providing social amenities like good education, power, housing, pipe-borne water and others. The components of national development include economic development, socio-cultural empowerment and development and how these impact on human development. Without human development, which is the development of the human capital of a nation or its citizens, national development can be thwarted or defeated. In fact, human development is one basis for judging the effectiveness of the economic development component of national development (Ogboru, 2007; Ranis, Stewart, & Ramirez, 2000). As they observed, economic development expressed in GNP can increase human development by expenditure from families, government and organizations such as NGOs. With the increase in economic growth, families and individuals will likely increase expenditures with the increase in income. This increase can lead to greater human development. Streeten (1982) put it better when he said that development must be redefined as an attack on the chief evils of the world today such as malnutrition, disease,

illiteracy, slums, unemployment and inequality. In other words, development must be measured in terms of jobs created, justice dispensed and poverty alleviated.

The bureaucracy or public service, broadly defined, refers to that machinery of government designed to execute the decisions and policies of political office holders. It is the institution that is charged with the responsibility of formulating and implementing policies and programmes of the government. In other words, while it is the duty of the political executive to determine and direct the focus of policies, the state bureaucracy is the administrative machinery through which the objectives are actualised. Political leaders make policies. The public bureaucracy implements it. If the bureaucracy lacks the capacity to implement the policies of the political leadership, those policies, however well intentioned, will not be executed in an effective manner (Anise, 1984, Okafor, 2005). The bureaucracy could therefore be described as the agency through which the activities of the government are realised. According to Chukwuebuka & Chidubem (2011), the public service consists of the civil service, parastatals and agencies. This tripartite structure is systematically patterned to serve as a lasting instrument through which the government drives, regulates and manages all aspects of the society. However, the magnitude of attitudinal decay, corruption and lack of accountability in the public service in Nigeria is terribly shocking. Thus, Rasheed succinctly remarked that “lack of accountability, unethical behaviours and corrupt practices have become so pervasive and even institutionalised norms of behaviours, leading to a crisis of ethics in the Nigerian public service” (Yahaya, 2006, p. 10). He also noted that apart from outright bribery and corruption, patronage, nepotism, embezzlement, influence peddling, use of one’s position for self-enrichment, bestowing of favours on relations and friends, moonlighting, partiality, absenteeism, late coming to work, abuse of public property, leaking and/or abuse of government information are also rampant.

There are two main theoretical viewpoints on the study of the public service or bureaucracy. These are Weberian and Marxian models. The Weberian model sees public service as a large-scale, complex, hierarchical and specialised organisation designed to attain rational objectives in the most efficient and effective manner. The realisation of such rational goals and objectives are maximised through the bureaucratic qualities of formalism and impersonality in the application of rules and regulations in the operation and management of the organisation. This model considers public service as a very superior organisation mainly because of certain qualities it has such as hierarchy, division of labour anchored on specialisation, policy of promotion and recruitment based on merit, in addition to impersonality in the conduct of official duties, security of tenure and strict observance of rules regulations, among others (Eme & Onwuka, 2010). While the public service in Nigeria is a complex, hierarchical, specialised and large-scale organisation and progressive in principal, the rot within it vitiates the positive bias that the Weberian model purports about bureaucracy.

A sharper delineation of public service in Nigeria comes from the Marxian model which sees bureaucracy as an instrument of oppression, exploitation and marginalization in the hands of the dominant class who control and manipulate the state and its apparatuses in the society to consummate their economic and political domination. In this wise, the public service is an instrument of the state reflecting the bias, interests and preferences of the ruling and dominant class. It is used by the ruling class for primitive accumulation, hegemonic control of the state and citizens and as an extension of the territory of the ruling class. This intention of the bureaucracy is usually concealed by both the dominant class and the bureaucrats, as efforts are constantly made to project the bureaucracy as a neutral and development agency working for the interest of everyone in the society. But this is only a decoy to hide its real motives and interests. The Marxian model seems closer to what obtains in the public sector in Nigeria. In Nigeria, the public service is parasitic, dependent on the wishes of its masters and is an appendage and extension of the hegemonic control the ruling class exerts on the state for the perpetuation of primitive accumulation and political domination in perpetuity.

REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON CORRUPTION AND LEADERSHIP CRISIS IN NIGERIA’S PUBLIC SECTOR

This segment looks at existing literature’s compilation of leadership crisis in Nigeria’s public sector and the infamous role of the monster of corruption that has hand-cuffed the country’s national development.

Leadership Crisis in Nigeria: Issues and Perspectives

According to Ebegbulem (2009, p. 5), Nigeria has not had the good fortunes of being

governed well since it gained its political independence in 1960 because “good and strong leaders” have never been in the saddle. He argues that from the first democratic experiment in 1960 to military regimes and back to democracy as practised in the country today, Nigeria has unfortunately been managed by leaders who are narcissistic and corrupt. They accumulate wealth at the expense of national development without deference to the basic needs of the masses. He believes the leadership from 1960 has criminally managed the country’s affairs and resources and throwing the people over the precipice where they now wallow in absolute poverty, illiteracy, hunger, rising unemployment, avoidable health crisis and insecurity.

In analyzing the plethora of leaders that have bestrode the country’s political landscape, Ebegbulem revealed that selfish, mediocre, tribal leaders and opportunistic small money-minded people masquerading as leaders have continued to regenerate over time. From Tafawa Balewa (1960-1966) to Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), leadership crisis in the country remains the same. Nwankwo cited in Ebegbulem (2009) ran a scholarly and apt commentary on the leadership convulsion in Nigeria. According to him, Alhaji Tafawa Balewa who ruled Nigeria from 1960-1966 lacked the capacity to chart a progressive course for national development because of lack of consciousness of development. General J. T. U. Aguiyi-Ironsi (January-July 1966) who was brought up under the most passive and apolitical circumstances of colonialist military institution neither understood the meaning of politics in general nor was he able to diagnose the specialties of the Nigerian political system whose leadership was placed on his shoulders. He was neither confused nor misled; he was simply ignorant and naïve. General Yakubu Gowon who ruled Nigeria from 1966 to 1975 was apparently the only Head of Government anywhere in the world who had so much money that he did not know what to do with it. The transient national affluence occasioned by the innocent but unsolicited upsurge of mineral resources cast a spell of short-sightedness over Gowon and his reactionary advisers. They mistook the transient flow of petroleum for a permanent future of the Nigerian economy without conducting a critical analysis of the international market forces which determine the cost of petroleum and its relevant place to national development.

General Murtala Muhammed’s emergence between (July 1975-February 1976) was revolutionary as well as challenging. He brought a new sense of mission and was radical in his approach to governance. He was cut short by the inordinate ambition of young military officers, who could not comprehend his firebrand approach to governance. The regime was, however, short to allow a better assessment. Although General Olusegun Obasanjo who took over after the assassination of his boss, General Murtala Muhammed, charted a new course for democratic governance and constitutional development, he, however, has a pathological hatred for the intellectuals and did not see any intellectual dimension that is germane to national development. His policy actions were frustrating the Ivory Tower as he starved the universities of funds and began the distortion of the educational institutions through untoward policy action. Shehu Shagari’s administration (1979-2003) also witnessed leadership crisis. His government did not strive to dismantle the existing power structure and a social relation that has kept Nigeria prostrate. His administration was characterized by a wild appetite for transient materialism. In trying to achieve his desired goal of maintaining strict financial discipline and accountability, Buhari who ruled the Nigerian state from 1983 to 1985 selectively imprisoned corrupt politicians while draconian decrees were promulgated to check leadership excesses (Imhonopi & Urim, 2011). The chink in his leadership style was the misguided conceptualization of the primary purpose of government as a gulag for the imprisonment of civil society activists and critics of his government.

The military president after General Buhari was General Ibrahim Babangida who turned the country to a political laboratory, and came up with a grandiose political transition that was described as the most expensive in Africa and at the end produced no democracy. With his intelligence and personal charm, his visionary and innovative programmes, Babangida could have been placed in the pantheon of revered political leaders in Nigeria and Africa, however, he was unable to meet it with sincerity and discipline required of good and selfless leadership. He deepened the culture of rent seeking and prebendal politics and made little effort in infrastructure development. General Sani Abacha who ruled the country between 1993 and 1998 governed with iron fist. While the entire country became an extension of his personal estate within a space of five years, he amassed so much wealth than most countries in Black Africa put together. His transmutation agenda was however cut short by divine intervention in 1998 when he died mysteriously. Leadership was thrust on the shoulder of General Abdusalam Abubakar. He was a cool-headed and compassionate man, though he emptied the foreign reserves of the country in the name of democratic transition. The transition process saw General Olusegun Obasanjo coming to power again in 1999, this time as a democratically

elected President. His effort at combating corruption was fruitless as he and officials under him were corrupt. He sold government property to himself and his cronies below the cost price. His successor, Alhaji Yar'Adua was an incompetent leader who lacked the qualities of a good and strong leader. The people of Nigeria and the world are watching to see the direction of the current administration of President Goodluck Jonathan.

The history of corruption in Nigeria

According to a report, available evidence indicates that corruption in Nigeria dates back to 1954 (ACBF, 2007). For example, the intensity of allegations of corrupt behavior in the public sector led to the establishment of the first corruption-related commission of inquiry to probe allegations of abuse of office levied against Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, who was by then the leader of government business, and was later elected as the first premier of what was then Nigeria's Eastern Region. He had been accused by the Chief Whip of that region's House of Assembly of using his position to transfer government funds to support the African Continental Bank, in which he allegedly had substantial personal interest. The same report mentioned that one of the most orchestrated cases of corruption investigation was a probe of ministers and other public functionaries in the old Western Region. The probe was instituted by the military's sole administrator, appointed in 1962 and found most of these functionaries guilty of corrupt self-enrichment during their tenures. In accordance with the recommendations of the probe panel, the identifiable fixed and movable assets of those found guilty were seized and sold by the government as a means of recovering some of the losses. This was also meant to serve as a deterrent against such practices in the future. The entrance of the military in Nigerian political domain did nothing to assuage the propensity for corrupt behaviour.

The first attempt by the military to purge itself of its corrupt elements occurred when the Murtala Mohammed-led military regime instituted a probe of all the military governors who served in Yakubu Gowon's administration. All but two were found guilty of corrupt self-enrichment. In addition to seizure of some of their known properties, the officers also lost their military ranks. The civilian regime of Alhaji Shehu Shagari, which governed from 1979 to 1983, was judged one of the most corrupt in the country up to the time of its abrupt termination by the military coup that brought Mohammed Buhari to power in December 1983. In fact, the alleged unprecedented level of corruption was the main reason adduced by the military for terminating the civilian regime. The Buhari regime tried to address the problem of corruption and attempted to promote a positive reorientation of national values through the introduction and enforcement of draconian military decrees. The nation was therefore couched into submission under the yoke of unpredictable and selective application of draconian laws. The regime also eroded the fundamental rights of citizens through arbitrary arrests without trials. The regime lost face when some of its very top members were caught committing legal violations for which the citizenry were being harshly punished.

This provided an entry point for another coup, from which emerged the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida. However, as events unfolded, the spate and magnitude of corruption under this regime made all preceding corruption in the country look like child's play. This was facilitated by two major factors: the long, nine-year tenure of the regime, and the huge surge in oil revenue, including the famous oil windfall occasioned by the Iraq War in 1991. A whopping sum of US\$12.67 billion earned during the war could not be accounted for, and became the subject of a national probe by a later regime. The probe panel's report has yet to be made public.

A curious twist was added to the problem with the alleged "loss" of the probe panel's records of proceedings and recommendations. Another spectacular role of the Babangida regime was its release of the properties seized from the indicted military governors who served in Yakubu Gowon's regime. The regime also restored to them their lost military ranks, in addition to tendering a national apology to the indicted officers. This single episode sent the wrong signal to all public officials that corruption in the public sector was a forgivable offence. After that, corruption continued to exacerbate and became a national culture, up to the advent of another civilian regime in Nigeria in 1999. The citizenry heaved a sigh of relief and had high hopes for a reversal of this cankerworm under the new representative political regime. However, the situation seems to be getting worse by the day, and corruption has remained at an alarming level.

In his well articulated and recent work, Agbor (2012) writes on the list of high-profile corrupt practices of some Nigerian leaders in the present fourth republic. He argued that the notoriety of Nigeria's corruption by its elected and appointed leaders led to the country being ranked 143 out of

182 countries in Transparency International's 2011 Corruption Perception Index. Corrupt practices among public officials have become a national pastime. He chronicles the high-profile list of corruption in Nigeria to include the arraignment of a one-time governor of Kogi State by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for embezzling and defrauding the state to the tune of N4 billion. In September 2006, the EFCC had 31 of Nigeria's 36 state governors under investigation for corruption (BBC, 2006). A one-time female Senator from Ogun State was quizzed by EFCC for receiving \$100,000 stolen from the Ministry of Health as well as the Health Minister and her deputy quizzed for stealing over N30 million from the Ministry's unspent funds from the previous year. The oil subsidy and the police pension scam are the latest manifestations of wanton corruption traceable to attitudinal recklessness of Nigerian leadership. Uwujaren's (2012) submission on this national embarrassment shows clearly a state suffering from leadership crisis. So far the EFCC has docked 20 of those who defrauded the federation through the fuel subsidy fund. Some of the cases revealed included Ogunbambo, Theck and Fargo who swindled the federal government of over N976 million for fuel they did not supply. Taylor, Nasaman and Ali were involved in N4.4billion fraud, and Alao was docked for N2.6 billion scam. Tukur, Ochonogo, External Oil, collectively defrauded the state to the sum of N1.899 billion. Nadabo, Peters and Abalaka and Pacific Silver stole the sum of N1.464billion and Watgbasoma, Ugo-Ngadi, Ebenezer, Ejidele and Ontario Oil defrauded the Federal Government of Nigeria to the tune of N1.959 billion (Uwujaren, 2012). The management of the police pension scheme has recently revealed a leadership that is grossly insensitive. It becomes very appalling to hear that over N200million (two hundred million naira) would be spent to verify less than twenty police pensioners overseas. The question is what then would be the total pension of those retired officers when over two hundred million is spent to verify them. Some of the state officials involved in this scam have come under prosecution by the EFCC. Esai Dangaba, Atiku Kigo, Ahmed Inuwa Wada, John Yusufu, Veronica Ulonma, and Zani Zira are being prosecuted for defrauding the police pension scheme in the sum of N32.8billion (Uwujaren, 2012).

According to Ike (2010), it is estimated that by 1999 past Nigerian leaders had stolen or misused \$407 billion or 225 billion pounds. This amount is equal to all western aid given to the continent of Africa. He also mentioned that the immediate former Chairman of Nigeria Economic, and Financial Crimes Commission disclosed that 220 billion pounds was squandered between independence from Britain in 1960 and the return to democracy in 1999. This stolen fortune tallies exactly with the 220 billion pounds of Western Aid given to Africa between 1960-1997. This amounted to six times the American help given to post-war Europe under the Marshall Plan for the Reconstruction of Europe. Ike also cited the World Bank's list of Nigeria's fund by depositors in four Western countries in 1999 and submitted to the then President of Nigeria. From that list, five of the depositors alone were responsible for much of the stolen funds in the World Bank list of 21 heavy looters. The total of amount deposited in western banks by the heaviest 21 looters is the equivalent of 150 billion dollars. He concluded that on balance, the leaders of the first and second republics were relatively not corrupt as evidence in the third and fourth republics has gradually shown the byzantine kleptomania and "lootocracy" by those supposedly entrusted with the national till. Thus corruption in Nigeria has both entangled the entire public and private sector matrix and deepened its vice-like grip on the society.

Perception of Public Sector Corruption in Nigeria

According to a report, the perception of public sector corruption in Nigeria is grave and a strong grudge against many public institutions runs deep in the minds of many Nigerians (ACBF, 2007). A product of a research study where Nigerians were asked to comment on their view of corruption in the public sector, findings showed that the Nigerian police force was judged the most corrupt national institution in Nigeria. The high ranking of the democratic institutions was also demoralising, as this would prevent the citizenry from enjoying the dividends of transition to civilian rule after years of protracted military rule. Further, the Ministry of Finance's report on perceived corruption in Nigeria—perpetrators, incidence, and severity—is equally revealing. For example, a broad spectrum of Nigerians believed that corruption pervaded all nooks and corners of the country, with a higher degree of severity in urban locations. A large proportion of individuals and corporate citizens were also of the view that it was practically impossible to enjoy any public service or patronage without one form of gratification or another. The table below accentuates these viewpoints.

Rank	Institution
1	National police
2	Political parties
3	National and state legislatures
4	Local/municipal governments
5	Federal/state executive councils
6	Traffic police and federal road safety corps
7	National electric power authority

Source: Ministry of Finance, 2003

In another study of the integrity of key national public institutions in Nigeria, the level of integrity of institutions surveyed was abysmally low (ACBF, 2007). These institutions included the executive, parliament, the office of the auditor-general, the police, the judiciary and electoral commissions. The worst culprit again appeared to be the Nigerian police force, which received the most negative ratings by all groups of concerned stakeholders: public officials, the private sector, and households. Observers considered this negative image an upshot of the lingering legacy of protracted military rule, during which several societal institutions were effectively neutralised, resulting in what some concerned stakeholders referred to as a “vandalisation” of the structure and normal procedures for purposeful public sector management. Non-state institutions, such as the private sector and civil society groups, are too weak and therefore are unable to put the national institutions in check.

Causes of Corruption in the Public Sector in Nigeria

According to ACBF (2007), corruption in the public sector is aggravated by the paltry level of wages accruable to its workers. Second, there is very limited opportunity for engaging in lawful economic activities outside the public sector, which dominates the Nigerian economy. Third, some studies (Apampa, 2003) have shown that lack of access to markets and lack of funding support to engage in self-employment activities compel many to take up appointments in the public sector. They believe it provides the greatest opportunity for amassing wealth, which can then be used to establish a business or acquire income-earning assets. This objective might also be achieved through bloated government contracts and other forms of patronage. Fourth, there is a lack of social security and the facilities needed to guarantee decent living at old age. This is further aggravated by the absence of well-managed pension schemes in the country. Fifth, national values condone and promote corrupt behaviour, as those who acquire affluence and buy influence through corrupt enrichment also command national and local respect and honours. Sixth, the structure of the Nigerian economy also contributes to corruption in one form or another. The government derives almost 85 percent of its revenue and 92 percent of its foreign exchange receipts from petroleum. Hence the citizenry is hampered from holding the government accountable, because they see revenue as government money rather than as belonging to the nation and themselves. This was not the case when government formerly derived its revenue from farmers engaged in the production and export of agricultural cash crops such as cocoa, cotton, palm produce, and rubber before the advent of oil. Research has also shown that, by its nature, oil wealth promotes and helps to sustain high-level corruption in affected countries. Finally, people believe that the government has always paid lip service to its anticorruption crusade, hence the perceived absence of any effective deterrence against corrupt behaviour.

Consequently, an investigation into public sector operations in Nigeria as represented by different institutions reveals a polychromatic picture of deceit, skullduggery, shenanigans, cronyism, political corruption, economic vice, “kleptocracy” and compromise of quality and safety standards for filthy lucre as demonstrated in the recent crashes involving Dana airline in 2012, Bellview and Sosoliso airlines with heavy loss of lives and property of citizens before government set up panels to review the aviation industry. Nigeria also boasts of an abundant corps of leaders who pretend to fight corruption but use their sacred and revered positions to get soaked in corrupt practices ala Farouk Lawan and Ndudi Elumelu. Onifade & Imhonopi (2012) argued that it is high time the country began to look towards the east to tame the distended monster of corruption so that corrupt political and economic managers of the common patrimony can be forced to face the full wrath of the law.

THE IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP CRISIS AND CORRUPTION ON NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The impact of leadership crisis and corruption on national development in Nigeria will require voluminous narration and citations which the work of this nature does not permit. Therefore, a few

issues have been identified as the drawbacks that leadership crisis and corruption in the public sector have effectuated. The impact of leadership crisis and corruption in the public sector on national development has resulted in the following:

- i. Poor infrastructural development which has brought about lack of power supply with its attendant negative consequences on industrial and economic development, substandard and crater-filled road networks which are more of a death trap than highways, poor quality and inadequate water supply and others;
- ii. A decrepit health sector that merely provides medical and health consultation but refers serious health challenges to well-developed health systems in other countries thus triggering capital flight and boosting the health sector of other countries. A pity this is, even the late President Shehu Musa Y'aradua had no confidence in the Nigerian health system, which the ruling class he belonged to had created. Today, many government functionaries at the slightest health challenge scamper abroad to get the best medical treatment while leaving the generality of citizens to the mercy of the poorly funded and sparsely equipped health sector in the country;
- iii. Falling standards in student and teacher education as a result of poor funding of education in the country. Nigerian graduates are becoming increasingly unemployable and may, sooner than later, lose the competitive edge for which products of the country's ivory towers were known for some years ago;
- iv. A morbid and porous security situation resulting in the wanton destruction of lives and property as currently initiated by the Boko Haram terror envoys and a cortege of criminal sociopaths such as armed robbers, carjackers, kidnappers, ritual killers and assassins.
- v. A failed, insensitive or clueless political leadership which is fighting hard to appease their constituents with crumbs from the national cake while stealing large chunks for self-preservation and perpetuation.
- vi. Grinding and growing poverty almost slipping into an absolute status for over 90% of Nigerians who are caught in its vicious grips and are wondering how to escape their helpless situation;
- vii. An embryonic economy that is said to experience growth spurts without development. The spurt in the economy has not put food on many a Nigerian's table, has failed to create jobs for the unemployed and has failed to improve the human development indices that make for genuine national development. The economic development in place has been plunged to the depths by the sustained thievery of public officials aided by their foreign allies and domestic private sector collaborators, fronts and cronies.

Unless and until something is done about the trilemma of leadership crisis, corruption and national underdevelopment, Nigeria may continue its match onto the precipice of national disintegration.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is no way Nigeria can survive under the current oppressive weight of leadership crisis riddled with corruption. Without doubt, national development will continue to remain a mirage when lip service is paid to fighting leadership crisis and corruption in the country. As Tokunbo in Lawal & Ariyo (2006, p. 67) observed, there is no exaggeration regarding the tragic events of corruption since the country's independence. All efforts to improve on the public service or bureaucracy have been frustrated by corruption. The evil so exists in every facet of national life that one has to bribe to get one's child into a school; one has to pay to secure a job and even continue to pay in some cases to retain it; one has to pay 10 percent of any contract obtained to grease the palms of government officials; one has to dash the tax officer to avoid paying taxes; one has to pay the hospital doctor and nurse to get proper medical attention and even some have to pay "something" to police officers to evade arrest. This catalogue of shame can no longer continue ad infinitum. As Imhonopi & Urin (2012) ruefully observed, over thirteen years since Nigerians embraced democracy (the largest unbroken period ever in its history), Nigerians are yet to bid farewell to the very situations that characterised the military era such as poverty, corruption, infrastructural decay, social menace, rising unemployment and violation of basic human rights. This worrisome situation has encouraged large-scale emigration especially among Nigerian youths to other countries perceived to offer better social and economic conditions. This situation cannot just continue. Lest Nigeria falls prey to a repeat of the Arab Spring, critical steps must be taken to avert the looming crisis on the horizon.

If the public sector is to become instrumental in facilitating good governance in the country, far-reaching reforms are needed. First, recruitment, and promotion of public service officials should be based on merit system as opposed to spoils system. This is because the enthronement of federal character principle of recruitment and other spoils system techniques have sacrificed efficiency and effectiveness in the Nigerian public service. Again, there is need to punish corrupt state officials however mighty their position in the governance hierarchy. Third, there is need to strengthen the institutions in place and place them above personal and ethnic considerations; Fourth, continued mental reorientation is needed to build a new Nigeria. Fourth, tied to the problem of national development is an expensive federal democracy in place which favours the elite and ruling classes. This structure needs to be reviewed. Fifth, there is need to discuss the way forward for national integration in Nigeria if the peace needed for national development is to be achieved. Sixth, the anti-corruption crusade of the Goodluck Jonathan administration must be total in its entire ramification with public enlightenment on the ills of Corruption and severe punishment put in place to punish offenders. Seventh, accountability and transparency should be the articles of faith in the nation. Eighth, scandals must be followed to the end. People that perpetuate corruption must not be allowed to go free due to their position in the society as is witnessed in cases involving key officers of the National Assembly. This has continued to encourage corruption. Appropriate punitive measures should be meted to corrupt officers. The anti-corruption bodies must be given the legal latitudes they require to operate unhindered. Ninth, assets declaration should be a must for all public officers. Tenth, government must seriously address the issues pertaining to the salaries, wages, pensions and gratuities of public officers. These should be paid appropriately to make citizens resist corrupt practices. Lastly, all allegations of corrupt practices of the past should be duly investigated and affected public officers made to face the wrath of the law, else the average Nigerian will just think the ongoing crusade against corruption is a continuation of the rhetoric and sloganeering of the past. Redeeming the image and destiny of Nigeria should become the concern of all stakeholders in the Nigerian project.

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Author Notes

David Imhonopi, PhD
&
Ugochukwu Moses Urim, MSc

Department of Sociology
College of Development Studies
Covenant University,
Sango Ota, Ogun State. Nigeria